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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 1050
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1552
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARAMARIBO 000392

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR LLUFTIG, INL, L/LEI, WHA/PD
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
CARACAS FOR LEGAAT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR KCRM PREL PGOV KPAO NS

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF SURINAMESE PRESS COVERAGE OF ROGER KHAN ARREST

REF: GEORGETOWN 433

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¶1. The arrest of Roger Khan and the USG's request for his extradition has dominated the news since Friday. Post provides a summary of Surinamese press coverage in chronological order to explain the action-reaction of Surinamese officials as they attempt to gain consensus on the disposition of Roger Khan.

¶2. On Friday June 16, 2006 the Public Relations Department of the Suriname Police Corps issued a press release announcing the seizure of 213kg of cocaine and the arrest of eight suspects, including several Guyanese.

¶3. On Saturday June 17, the media reported that one of the arrested suspects was Shaheed "Roger" Khan, one of Guyana's most wanted fugitives sought by U.S. authorities on drug charges.

¶4. On Monday June 19, the media quoted Justice and Police Minister Chandrikapersad Santhoki, saying that on Saturday the Government of Suriname had received an informal request from the U.S. Government for extradition of Shaheed Khan. Mr. Santhoki said that Suriname was capable of mounting a trial against Khan. Santhoki left open the possibility of extradition by adding that if evidence and local law wouldn't allow for a strong enough case against Khan then GOS would send him to where he could be put away for a long time.

¶5. On Tuesday June 20, the daily newspaper De Ware Tijd reported that, according to reliable sources information provided by an alleged corrupt Surinamese police officer led to the arrest of Shaheed Khan and others. The newspaper also quoted Embassy's spokesman Tom Walsh who confirmed that a dipnote was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting provisional arrest for the purpose of extradition of Shaheed Khan to the U.S. to stand trial. The paper also quoted Khan's Guyanese lawyer Glenn Hanoman, who traveled to Suriname after his arrest. Speaking to Guyanese and Surinamese journalists, Hanoman said that he thinks that his client is much safer in Suriname than in Guyana. According to the lawyer his client came to Suriname to

escape persecution in Guyana. According to his lawyer, Khan fears the Chief of the Guyanese Police Winston Felix's intent to do him harm or possibly kill him. He colorized Guyana's attempts to arrest him as a politically motivated manhunt. Per Hanoman, "I hope that Khan will not be extradited to Guyana, because we don't trust Guyanese justice." Hanoman also said that he is concerned about possible extradition to the USA. If Surinamese authorities extradite him to the U.S. that would be tantamount to providing assistance to the illegal kidnapping of a suspect as according to Hanoman no extradition treaty exists between the U.S. and Suriname.

¶6. In Dagblad Suriname on Tuesday, Justice Minister Santhoki said that possibly Khan will be extradited to the USA because he is a serious threat to national, regional and international security.

¶7. On Tuesday, the Embassy received follow-up inquiries from De Ware Tijd, De West, STVS (national TV station), AP, Reuters and AFP. All media wanted confirmation that the U.S. Government had submitted an official request for extradition of Roger Khan. The Embassy confirmed that on Monday June 19 a formal request was delivered via diplomatic channels. Reuters asked if Khan was the same Khan named in INCSR 2006 report (volume I Guyana pg 187 part II). Embassy confirmed. Odd inquiry from local reporter at STVS (state run TV) asked if Roger Khan had earlier met with Embassy officials here at hotel Ocean View (see reftel).

¶8. On Wednesday June 21, press began reporting results of their inquiries of Embassy as to whether formal notification to GOS has been made. Press reports that formal diplomatic channels informed GOS and that the U.S.

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request for extradition is based on the 1887 (amended in 1904) Extradition Treaty between the U.S. and the Netherlands along with the 1988 UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (DeWareTijd - 21 June).

¶9. AG, Subhas Punwasi, was quoted as saying that the Government is still ascertaining the validity of the 1904 extradition treaty. He opined that if the agreement doesn't apply, then the UN Convention might come into play. The AG further explained that a suspect could challenge the legitimacy of his extradition; in that case a judge will have to decide whether or not there are legal objections against it. The Government has the final say however (DWT 21 June). The Attorney General's Office has prohibited contact between Kahn and his lawyers, but the defense has objected to this (De West 20 June).

¶10. Khan's lawyer, Glenn Hanoman, reports being very skeptical of the U.S. extradition request and says that there is no legal basis for extradition of his client, stating once again that there is no bilateral extradition treaty between the U.S. and Suriname and that his client cannot be extradited on the basis of a multilateral UN agreement. (DWT 21 June)

¶11. De Ware Tijd refers to a case, roughly a year ago, in which the U.S. also asked for extradition of a Colombian woman and the request was denied (DWT 21 June). [Note: She was prosecuted locally and sentenced to more than eight years in prison. End note.]

¶12. Minister Santokhi (MOJ) told press that the Guyanese Government has decided not to request extradition of Khan. Per Santokhi, "a request has been received from the U.S. and the GOS is seriously considering this request, but the most important thing is that we reach a decision which is beneficial for Suriname and the region." Santokhi also said that Khan was a member of a criminal organization, which had ties with the Colombian FARC. The two organizations had regular arms for drugs exchanges. The Minister proudly

stated that previously whole armies have tried to apprehend Khan, but that only the Surinamese Police was successful (Times 21 June).

¶13. De Ware Tijd reported that technology, donated by the U.S. Embassy, was used to arrest Khan last week. It states that local authorities used satellite technology to trace Khan's exact location and tap his phone calls (Khan was using a satellite phone) and the Surinamese authorities were monitoring Khan's calls even before he fled to Suriname (DWT 21 June).

¶14. By the end of workday Wednesday number of press inquiries to Embassy have dropped off. News has left the impression that next step will need to be a decision by the GOS as to whether to try Khan here or grant extradition request.

BARNES